



FASHION INTERNATIONAL

NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FASHION WORLD

VOLUME #30 / ISSUE #6 & #7

SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT

Spring Part III

After an uninspiring past couple of seasons, retailers had something to smile about at the end of the American and European collections. The word circulated everywhere that for women there were finally some wearable and interesting clothes from which to choose. Early on during NY Fashion Week,

these statements puzzled us. Much of what we'd seen thus far was more suitable for the boudoir than for the streets and workplace. Jill Stuart showed some pretty frothy confections shaded in tones of ivory, pale pink and peach. Renowned photographer Francesca Sorrenti commented mid-show,

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OUT OF ITALY

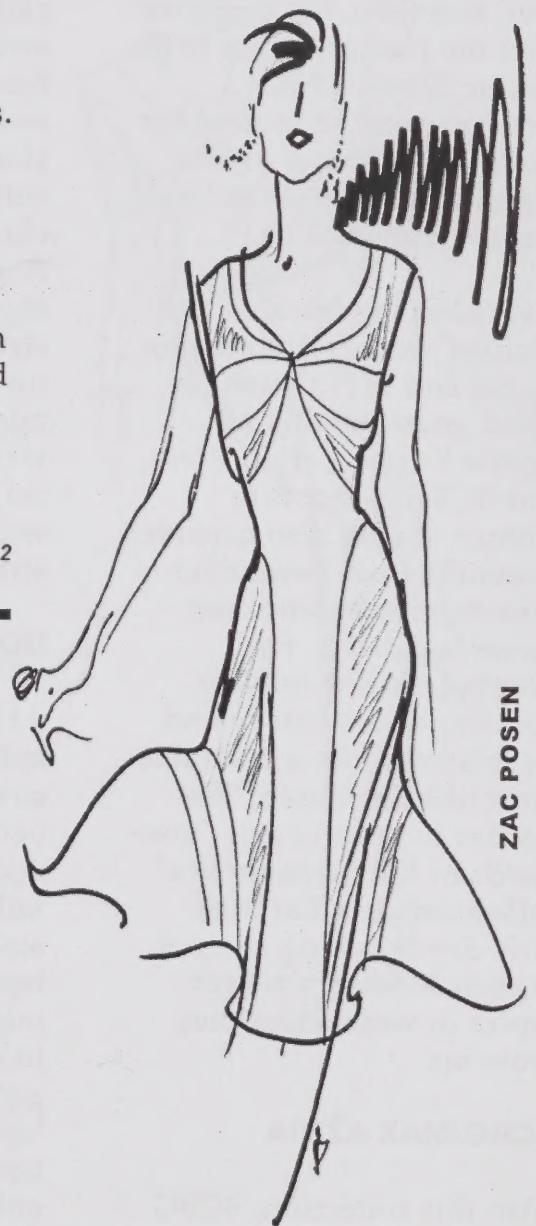
Spring/Summer 2004 Knits and RTW

Recently FI was invited to see a number of designers and manufacturers at the offices of the Italian Trade Commission. This one-stop shopping venue was the ideal setting for retailers and press to take note of the spring 2004 collections. Most of the collections fell in the bridge category, and there was an

emphasis on "classic" knitwear and separates, although we also found a couple of fashion-forward and more cutting edge resources.

For the boutique or upscale specialty store looking to go beyond the usual high profile suspects like Armani,

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"these pretty things are really intended for the young." Hemlines were sky high, corsets and hot pants abounded. Along with vertiginous heels, little was left to the imagination. This was even more the case at Betsey Johnson's cabaret style show. We agree with journalist Janet Ozzard (vogue.com runway report) that, this time, the designer took the raunchiness a trifle too far. However, Ms. Johnson must be lauded for staying true to her vision regardless of what the latest trends happen to be.

A number of wearable and exciting clothes did emerge by the end of NY Fashion Week, most notably at Donna Karan, Calvin Klein, and BCBG. Corporate women should also consider pantsuits from newcomer Bree to supplement their career wardrobe. For evening, no one in New York captures fantasy and translates it into a wearable form like Zac Posen. The clothes in his ethereal "mermaids of the Sargasso Sea" collection are what little girls daydreaming in front of their Mother's mirror aspire to wear when they grow up.

BCBG/MAX AZRIA

With this collection, BCBG designer MAX AZRIA permitted his imagination freer reign rather than opting for

the more practical path, which has in the past made him a commercial success. His bet paid-off in spades — this is one of his most interesting collections to date. The color palette was reminiscent of the '20s and included soft dusty rose, aquamarine and a large oversized floral print. One of the standouts was a dress composed of a nude built-in camisole sewn onto a combination dark solid and floral skirt. Another was #13, a sweet little cream shorty A-line camisole dress that ended with a dropped hip skirt composed of teensy ruffles. Ever conscious of his clients' practical needs, Mr. Azria delivered some great short jackets with cropped sleeves and slouchy pants for women seeking a more businesslike look. There was also an '80s reference by way of some canvas bags with grommet studded straps.

DONNA KARAN

At DONNA KARAN, atmosphere is all. We waited in comfort on cushion-covered benches as Bernard Arnaud and other A-list guests milled-about on the mellow amber-lit runway. This show had the prettiest hair and makeup of the week. The look hearkened back to the golden Greek goddesses of legend. Eyes were painted in terra cotta to match the gold, peach and sage green color palette. Glitter bronze was used to maximum effect, highlighting the girls'

skin and drawing the eye to the soft, diaphanous clothes. Details such as shredded chiffon and burnished copper sequins added to the effect. This is not to say that there weren't some mighty wearable pieces that Donna Karan fans would be thrilled to add to their wardrobes. For daytime, there were some of the best leather pieces we've seen in years — bar none. The terra cotta leather coats and jackets looked as if they were whisper thin and as light as fine cashmere. For evening, it would be hard to do better than the elegant green satin coat with a huge fold-over collar. Adding a tone of exoticism were intriguing huge woven leather belts that brought to mind the '80s as well as an ethnic touch. Neither can you go wrong with her white leather trench coat that transitions beautifully from day into evening. The best came towards the end. The gown worn by super model Angela Lindvall should have been in the MET's recent "Goddess" exhibition. Sleeveless and sporting signature Donna Karan slits on both sides, it was bondage-like but wasn't in the least bit "bondage". The lines suggested sensuality rather than the hard-edged glamour of Helmut Lang's bondage dresses.

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LONDON —

A Kaleidoscope of Prints

Don't throw out all your black clothes; rather add prints of every color to move your wardrobe into the spring. London Fashion Week was awash with geometric prints and beautiful paisleys. Designers used their artistic talents to fill their collections with prints worthy of being in a museum and, indeed, one has even made it into the Victoria and Albert Museum (Eley Kishimoto), and another (Lulu Guinness) had a full-on exhibition at Sotheby's.

Some tips for next season:

Goodbye to the dark heavy mood of the past seasons.

Hello to pretty in pink and florals.

Say NO to combat trousers!

Think autumnal colors especially sun-dried olive green reminiscent of rolling Greek hills.

Remember the blues of the Mediterranean and the Taj Mahal — wear them and feel good.

Orange is the key story and it looks as if it might be here to stay.

Glitter — sequins that adorn, shine and flatter. Just a few by day, but piled on heavily at night.

Thighs still need to look good, either in leggings or peeking out above over-the-knee-boots (even in summer).

Capri pants, Art Deco, Femininity and 40's film stars with tiny waists and hourglass figures that look divine in soft pretty dresses. Think sirens.

Leather and suede and then more leather, but always as soft as butter.

Swimwear from the new "cruise chic" on offer from almost every designer — all styles and colors.

London Fashion Week featured more than 100 fashion shows, 50 on the official schedule and 50 off-site (including three "alternative" sites). The parties went all night every night and sparkled like the sequins on the flashy sassy dresses that were a highlight of the London season.



BOUDICCA

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Max Mara, Marni, and Missoni, et al., this was a step in the right direction as far as introducing the American market to some fresh, new and saleable resources. The following collections presented a range of diversified looks for the savvy buyer to take note of for future reference.

CODIS CONFEZIONI is a fully integrated company from design to production that develops private label lines for top retailers. While already linked with such name designers as Alice Roi and John Varvatos, Codis is now working to establish the company more fully in the U.S. market. Codis uses its out-sourcing (working directly with mills) to offer each client a full service package within their set budget. We recommend Codis for the retailer who wants to expand their private label suit, skirt and trouser divisions.

L'OFFICINA DELLA MODA is a family owned firm catering to the young fashion forward customer. New for spring are the cool linens, viscose blends and cotton separates in a palette that ranges from neutrals to brights and stark black and white. The sheer tee, with graffiti print front and ruches, paired with cropped, pinstriped pants (sketched) is a typical example. A very saleable collection aimed at the working woman comes

from **MILENA MOSELE**. For spring the standouts include the optical white/black pieces, the mix/match wardrobe components, shantung silk combined with cotton knits, and the turquoise/blue/peach ribbed poor boy sweater.

A well-established knitwear company **SENSAZIONI** specializes in related active sportswear and coordinates that are machine washable. The focus is on detailing, which for spring means zippers, shirring, asymmetric hemlines, pleating and basketweave effect knits. Styling is classically refined and understated with the emphasis on the yarns. Terrific, moderately priced knitwear collections for both men and women by **MIREA (The PSV Group)** focuses on quality, comfort and attention to detail. The collection is characterized by casual separates, both classic and fashionable, in a complete range of colors and sizes. The twin sets in stripes or solids were especially lovely in a medley of pink, white and burgundy.

A third generation family owned company, **MARSIL** provides a total look — from knits to wovens in a delicious soft color palette for spring '04. Fabrics include linens, floaty chiffon, cotton and tulle. The coordinated sportswear pieces are sized from 6 to 20, and are ideally suited for the upscale specialty boutique. There's an emphasis on adapting all the key trends for the larger woman who wants easy yet chic clothes that will take her from morning to night. Standouts include hand washable black jersey dresses, pretty tulle skirts and a gray linen car wash pleated skirt trimmed with orange taping. **SHIRT PASSION**, making its debut in the U.S., is a fashion-forward collection of tops in polyamide, viscose and silk. Think of this as the Italian version of Custo Barcelona with a lot more attitude and attention to intricate detailing. This is the perfect upscale boutique collection. The explosion of color and print make this a must-buy!

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FI INSIDER

On view at the Philadelphia Museum of Art until January 4, 2004, "Shocking! The Art and Fashion of Elsa Schiaparelli" is a must-see exhibit for all true fashionistas. Celebrated for her flamboyant tongue-in-chic creations, worn by society's style arbiters of the '30s, '40s and beyond, Schiaparelli was also known for her collaboration with many of the leading artists of the time including Dali and Cocteau. This comprehensive show makes one point abundantly clear: her designs are not only beautiful but, with their modern slant, transcend time.

For Exhibition Information, contact: 215-763-8100

TRENDSETTING

AT THE JA

FINE JEWELRY – PART III

Each booth at the JA displays creations that are more dazzling than the next. While it is our intent to present a different array of designers in each subsequent report, we do revisit some designers who have produced special pieces that are receiving a very favorable response at retail.

As we did last season at the JA, we followed PR maven Nancy Trent, owner of Trent & Company, Inc., on her whirlwind "Red Carpet tour". Ms. Trent focused on what Hollywood stars are wearing, which corresponded with our mission to identify the leading jewelry trends at the JA. The stars are, after all, today's trendsetters in fashion and accessories. A few interesting things we saw along the way were the use of stingray skin in conjunction with gold at **STEPHEN CHRISS**. The designer maintains that the skins are "very durable and comfortable". **S&R DESIGNS** hit on the modular theme, as did **ZOPPINI**. Whimsy is also in

as we observed at **IDGD**. The company is selling-out of its Martini pavéed glass charm necklace worn by a character on "Sex in the City".

The stainless steel link bracelets by **ZOPPINI** appeal to everyone, from the stars at the Billboard Awards to suburban mothers and teens who buy one link charm at a time, creating their own unique statement. Consumers purchase charms representing their favorite things to replace the plain links. Popular choices are tiny enamel dogs, a high-heeled shoe and a tennis racket. The company also has wide distribution: we found a selection of charms at malls and at small specialty card and gift stores. A plain stainless link "starter" bracelet (one without any charms) retails for approximately \$50. The charms are available in simple enamel or 14K gold styles. The bracelets created for the Billboard Award nominees were fashioned of 18K gold rather than stainless steel.

Navel jewelry has long been in vogue with pop divas such as Janet Jackson, Britney Spears et al. Many of the stars go to **PRANA GIOIA** for their belly rings. It seems not only pop divas are wearing navel jewelry these days. "This year," exhibitor Doron Basha reports, "our business is growing, and it's becoming *mainstream* to wear navel jewelry." The 30-40 year olds are feeling good about themselves and are buying the higher-end diamond pavé pieces that go for around \$1,375, while the college-age girls and those as old as 27 typically spend around \$375.

Thanks to the new convertible bails, designs with gemstones are now multi-purpose; the bail attaches to the Belly Jewel and converts it into a pendant. On assignment from London, a British editor taking the tour with us remarked that belly jewelry "has experienced enormous success in Europe."

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CALVIN KLEIN (FRANCISCO COSTA)

What a triumph for a debut collection! As several of the critics remarked, he may not have taken a lot of risks, but he didn't need to. FRANCISCO COSTA'S spring collection was hands-down the best source for day clothes this season. As in Mr. Klein's best collections, there weren't any distracting frills and hair and make-up were sleek and polished, but not overly perfect. An air of confident calm prevailed throughout. The muted palette was a sophisticated melange of warm browns, black and white, punctuated by bright orange and pink. Skirts were knee-length topped with white shirts and form-fitting U-scooped neck knits of such a fine gauge that you just wanted to reach out and touch them. Some highlights were the semi-sheer, camel silk knit turtleneck and matching skirt. Mr. Costa can also cut a mean suit. Calvin Klein fans will surely pick up his skinny shiny charcoal pantsuit that's a winner for day and/or evening. Speaking of evening, Mr. Costa referred back to the '80s and produced a very Calvin-esque sleeveless knee-length sack dress in shocking pink.

MARC JACOBS

MARC JACOBS' collection had a very vintage flavor thanks to some wonderful rough-edged ruffle detail work and an ivory and sepia pink color palette. Mr. Jacobs has the knack of hitting on the trends (this time, via his color palette), but always marches to his own drummer, as does his contemporary, Anna Sui. For spring, the designer went back to his years at Perry Ellis. We loved his slouchy man-style pants and horizontal striped silk cashmere sweaters. As always, there were the great knits. The must-have one on this go-around is the ballerina wrap cashmere sweater. He cut the sweetness quotient with offbeat floral dresses in unusual color palettes such as brown, purple, yellow and green. For evening, there's a lustrous platinum short sleeved jacket. Our favorite pieces were the ivory chiffon dresses aged to look as if they might have been turn of the century under garments. Some old-fashioned touches added to the vintage mood — oversized corsages placed on dropped waistbands and high-heeled granny boots. However, the best came last. Any Greek Goddess would be proud to wear the delicate rose goddess-style gown worn by super model Gisele Bundchen!

ZAC POSEN

Thirty million dollars worth of Harry Winston jewelry never hurt anyone, however ZAC POSEN'S clothes were so good, he didn't need the ice, although they did add a nice sparkle to this stellar collection. He had the dress of the week; the deceptively simple lavender pieced satin bias cocktail dress worn by Carmen Kass. Equally enticing was the silver cowl front dress worn by model Dewi Driegen. Mr. Posen can also cut a suit, exemplified by a sharp rose pink jacket with no sharp edges or visible closure. For a dressier occasion, a yellow dress with paillettes featured a mermaid tail hem. Adding to the glamour factor was the surprising appearance of Victoria's Secret model Heidi Klum in a lipstick red harem ensemble. Celebrities and members of the social set will be vying with one another to get their hands on Mr. Posen's gray chevron patterned flounce hem gown. The gown appeared to be an extension of the model's body, held-up by straps so fine they were almost invisible to the eye.

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This same editor also commented on the tremendous response silver and sterling diamond jewelry has had in the UK teen market. UK Company, Kit Heath Inc. makes silver pieces with tiny diamonds at very affordable price points, well under \$100 per item.

In the '80s, the Swatch Watch Company started the trend of buying watches for fun. Fans could wear a different watch every day of the week. Just recently, Eyal Lalo, president of the **INVICTA WATCH COMPANY** has taken the concept to a higher level. This Swiss-made line of watches are oversized (as were some of the early Swatch models), colorful, innovative and, best of all, relatively affordable. Invictas retail from \$150 to \$3,500. Celebrities love them and have endorsed the brand by appearing in press photos wearing them. Invicta aggressively promotes itself and made it into last year's prized Oscars goodie bag. The chronographs are very oversized (face and numerals) and come with snappy watchbands. Our favorite – the model with the shocking orange watchband!

Designer **JOHN HARDY** continues to create an impressive number of "ready-to-wear" collections as well as continuing to expand his "couture" Cinta line. FI

introduced the Cinta line in last season's report (Vol. 30, Issue 2). This season, he introduced the "dot collection". The spiral dot bracelets are the hottest item on the line. The pieces, as many of Mr. Hardy's, are highly labor-intensive. It takes a jeweler three to four days to make a single coil dot bracelet. Mr. Hardy, a consummate storyteller, told us that the dot is the world's oldest design component: "The spiral bracelet is held together with a titanium spring and is the perfect marriage between modern technology and antiquity. Clients wear them in multiples — my wife Cynthia wears about eight at one time." In addition, "the price is right," he quips in a phone interview. A triple coil silver dot ring retails for \$395 and the five coil bracelet for \$695.

The designer is also very enthusiastic about his three-year-old Cinta line. He is equally pleased with his ongoing collaboration with Asprey's former head designer Guy Bedarida. The Cinta pieces "are a fusion of French and Asian refined details and workmanship". Each item is a work of art and is numbered as is a print or photo. Those who buy a Cinta original also receive the original drawing. The Hardys tend to prefer unusual precious and semi-precious stones such as pink Rubellite and mint-green Tsavorite. The central stones are large, usually over six carats, and are set in pavés

of rose cut cognac and white diamond trillions, to name just a few combinations. The overall effect is a piece of unusual design, color and richness. One of the most stunning pieces recently made is the 18K yellow gold ring with round green Tourmaline center stone (6.06 ct) set with green sapphires (8.19 ct) and rose cut champagne and rose cut cognac diamonds pavé. The collection pieces are surprisingly well priced, starting at \$4,000 and topping-out at \$25,000.

Finally, we took a break from the usual business of reviewing the wares at the booths to listen to minaudiere designer, **KATHERINE BAUMAN** tell us about her successful battle against copyists. According to her and other jewelers, there is a disturbing increase in designer forgeries. In collaboration with the U.S. Government, Ms. Bauman was successful in stopping a group of counterfeiters who were forging and selling copies of her designer evening bags. Ms. Bauman's designs appear regularly on the arms of A-list celebrities, such as Katherine Zeta Jones and Halle Berry. While many of the colorful crystal studded bags are whimsical and large enough for only a \$20 bill and a lipstick, some of her bags are a bit larger. The attention to detail is impeccable, and Ms. Bauman's bags can indeed be considered jewelry! ●

BOUDICCA was undoubtedly the star of the season, exciting and hot. The designing duo of Zowie Broach and Brian Kirkby are flying high. American Express, having previously nurtured and sponsored Alexander McQueen, is now backing Boudicca, giving them the means by which to thrive. Their "to die for" architecturally structured suits, hi-tech fabrics and beautifully crafted dresses are this season's must-haves. Leathers are a major part of the collection (a definite Boudicca trademark) and their black and white theme still dominates, but is infused with little frills and tucks which soften the hard effect, yet maintain the important desirable edginess that is the Boudicca signature.

SOPHIA KOKOSALAKI produced another star collection. Her Greek origins influenced her drapey tops and dresses (especially those in white), with dresses reminiscent of Greek goddesses floating across the steps of the Acropolis. The collection was strong, commercial and worthy of a designer who will probably be snatched up by next season and whisked away from London.

JULIEN MACDONALD, still using the references from his past, created a more commercial collection.

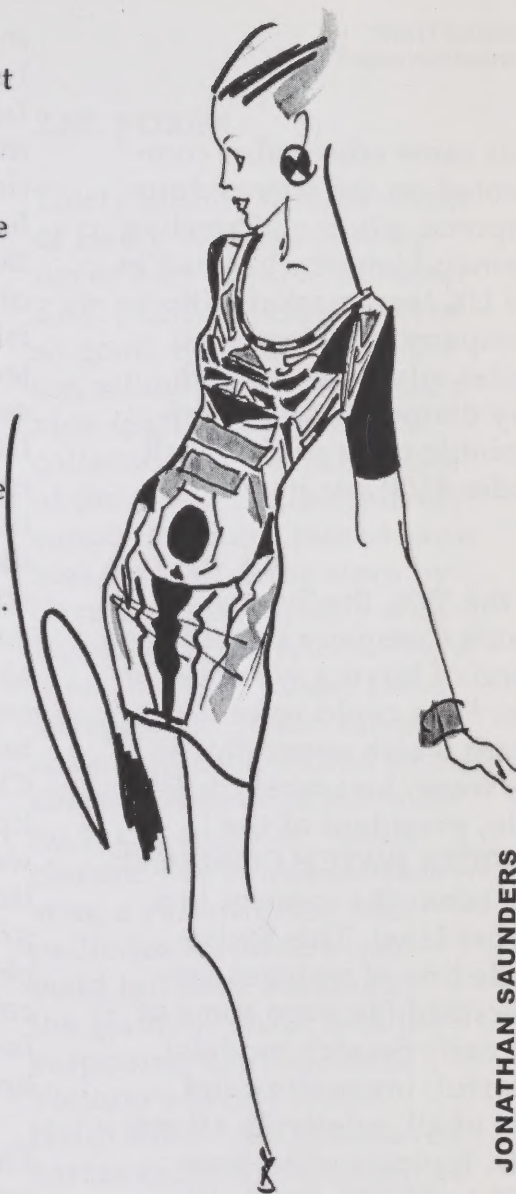
Tailored suits exposed his strong craftsmanship skills, while his daywear was short but not indiscreet, rather real and desirable.

Evening/nightwear (the Macdonald trademark) were full on rock n' roll, all a-glow with sparkle and shine, just what a girl needs to go to the MTV awards.

PREEN, showing across town in a shabby warehouse up four flights of stairs on a typical London day of non-stop rain did not disappoint. The collection pulled off the perfect balance of bondage, fun and style. Leggings dominated, accented with leather stripes around the derriere for a focus that was sharp and sexy. Panty garters were overlaid on straight khaki skirts giving the outfits a slight fetish edge. The use of black cotton polished to a high sheen was very effective.

ALICE TEMPERLEY continues as a rising star. Watch out for her pretty in pink collection, featuring moon motifs, all in lovely, often blousey, silhouettes to make any girl (or woman) feel good.

JONATHAN SAUNDERS is another rising star. His prints are so divine that he has already been signed-up by Pucci. He is the one to watch and buy. Saunders patterns on heavy jersey "sweats" will be hard to take off day or night.



JONATHAN SAUNDERS

ELEY KISHIMOTO produced prints that are inspired and worthy of the exhibition in the impressive Victoria and Albert Museum! Also, holding their own and growing are **HOUSE OF JAZZ** and **HAMISH MORROW**. Romper shorts and polka dot bandannas were recurring throughout both collections.

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INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE

JAN. 4-6 GIFT SHOW	ORLANDO	JAN. 12-16 ACCESSORY MARKET	NEW YORK	(Childrenswear)	
JAN. 5-9 SWIMWEAR MARKET	NEW YORK	JAN. 12-16 HOSIERY MARKET	NEW YORK	JAN. 16-18 BREAD & BUTTER (Men's Urbanwear)	BERLIN
JAN. 5-16 RTW MARKET IN NEW YORK	NEW YORK	JAN. 12 16 INTIMATE APPAREL MARKET	NEW YORK	JAN. 16-19 D&A ANNEX (Better Contemporary RTW)	LOS ANGELES
JAN. 6-8 FLORIDA FASHION FOCUS (Women's)	MIAMI	JAN. 12-16 MEN'S RUNWAY COLLECTIONS	MILAN	JAN. 16-19 BRIGHT E COMPANIES (RTW, Accessories, Footwear)	LOS ANGELES
JAN. 8-11 PITTI IMMAGINE UOMO (Men's)	FLORENCE	JAN. 13-15 DIRECTION (Textile Design Show)	NEW YORK	JAN. 16-20 WOMEN'S & CHILDREN'S MARKET	LOS ANGELES
JAN. 9-10 KIND & JUGEND (Childrenswear)	KOLN, GERMANY	JAN. 13-15 PRINTSOURCE (Prints/Textiles)	NEW YORK	JAN. 17-19 ASR (Action Sports Retailer)	SAN DIEGO
JAN 9-12 THE GIFT FAIR	ATLANTA	JAN. 13-15 FASHION SHOE	BOLOGNA	JAN. 17-20 CALIFORNIA GIFT SHOW	LOS ANGELES
JAN. 10-13 NOUVEAU COLLECTIVE (Women's RTW)	NEW YORK	JAN. 13-16 FASHION WEEK	HONG KONG	JAN. 18-19 SHOE SHOW	LOS ANGELES
JAN. 11-13 ACCESSORIE CIRCUIT	NEW YORK	JAN. 13-16 WORLD BOUTIQUE (Premiere - RTW/Accessory show)	HONG KONG	JAN. 19-22 COUTURE SHOWS (Spring/Summer)	PARIS
JAN. 11-13 INTERMEZZO COLLECTIONS (RTW)	NEW YORK	JAN. 14-16 INT'L FASHION FAIR	TOKYO	JAN 21-22 EUROPEAN PREVIEW (Textiles)	NEW YORK
JAN. 11-13 D&A ANNEX (RTW/Accessories/Lifestyle)	NEW YORK	JAN. 13-20 GIFT & HOME MARKET	LOS ANGELES	JAN. 21-24 KIDS FASHION PARIS	PARIS
JAN. 11-13 INDUSTRY 212 (RTW/Accessories)	NEW YORK	JAN. 14-17 HEIMTEXTILE (Home & Household Textiles)	FRANKFURT	JAN. 22-26 WOMEN'S & CHILDREN'S MARKET	DALLAS
JAN. 11-13 ACCESSORIESTHESHOW	NEW YORK	JAN. 15-19 BISUTEX (Fashion Jewelry/Accessories)	MADRID	JAN. 23-25 FIMI (Childrenswear)	VALENCIA, SPAIN
JAN. 11-13 MODA MANHATTAN (RTW)	NEW YORK	JAN. 15-19 IBERJOYA (Jewelry, Silverware, Watches)	MADRID	JAN. 23-26 PREMIERE CLASSE (Accessories)	PARIS
JAN. 11-13 THE CHILDREN'S CLUB	NEW YORK	JAN. 15-19 INTERGIFT (Int'l Gift fair)	MADRID	JAN. 23-26 PRET-A-PORTER (RTW)	PARIS
JAN. 11-14 NAT'L RETAIL FEDERATION (Annual Convention)	NEW YORK	JAN. 16-20 INT'L GIFT & HOME ACCESSORIES SHOW	DALLAS	JAN. 23-26 CASABO (Multi-Sector Lifestyle Menswear, Accessories, Cosmetics)	PARIS
JAN. 11-18 VINCENZA ORO TRADE FAIR (Fine Jewelry)	VINCENZA, ITALY	JAN. 16-18 PITTI IMMAGINE BIMBO	FLORENCE	JAN. 23-26 BIJORHCA (Better Costume Jewelry/Accessories)	PARIS
				JAN. 23-26 SALON DE LA LINGERIE	PARIS

"LONDON. . . ."
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London is taking off as the accessories capital of the world. While the aforementioned designers excite, most of the mainstay "old school" designers failed to thrill. On the other hand, the accessories on display all over town are innovative, creative and outstanding. The edge that London used to have in styling has shifted to accessories. Two off-site well-organized exhibitions highlighted this — Eye to Eye and Annexe. Next season we predict that these off-site accessories shows will grow and help put London back on the

fashion map.

Some accessory names to look for:

TN_29 are shoes to die for! Beautifully constructed with a hint of humor.

Strumpets by Elizabeth Melinekare offer a contemporary twist on 1930's garters.

Holistic Silk — lavender infused slippers made from exquisite brocades.

Sam Ubhi - chunky bone bracelets that rule.

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1 Year Subscription \$100.00
Outside USA \$110.00

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VOL. XXX No. 6 & 7

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and GOOD WILL &
may the NEW YEAR
bring PEACE . . .

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